DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 341 914 CG 024 010

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TITLE Believe It or Not: Why December Is the Best Month To Job Hunt.
PUB DATE Mar 91
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Youth Professionals' Institute (17th, Anaheim, CA, March 24-27, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Employment Interviews; Employment Opportunities; *Holidays; *Job Search Methods

ABSTRACT

This paper offers 10 facts to address common misconceptions about job-hunting during the holiday season. The facts are: (1) job hunters are going to be a bother to most of the employers that they call no matter what day or time that they call, so call them regardless of the day or time; (2) most employers are not merely lying back and coasting through until the end of the year, so the job hunters might as well try; (3) if they are not interested in an applicant today, it could very well have nothing to do with the holiday; (4) the fact that the employer is so busy with the Christmas rush season is precisely the reason to try; (5) there are fewer people looking for jobs; (6) many companies are doing their new employee selection now to coincide with their fiscal year and the tax year; (7) if there are businesses that are coasting, they probably have extra time on their hands and may welcome a request for a meeting; (8) employers may be full of good will, and more likely to make exceptions to see people more during the holiday season than at any other time of year; (9) nobody likes the job hunting process and will put it off any way they can; and (10) Christmas just would not be Christmas without wondrous things happening at that time of year. (LLL)

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT:
WHY DECEMBER IS THE BEST MONTH TO JOB HUNT

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Dear Mr. Karp,

Since the holiday season is upon us, wouldn't it be better to take a rest, enjoy the holidays, and start job hunting again after the first of the year?

Signed,

Typical Concerned Job Hunter

I get asked this same question every year just as sure as people make fun of my age on my birthday. It usually starts around the beginning of November and to date, as of December 2nd, six people have already asked me. I will give you some popular notions and some hard facts and let you decide. Ready? Here goes.

The common thought is: 1) employers must be laying back, just trying to make it through the holidays, so they probably do not want to be bothered with hiring decisions, 2) Since they have Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years on their minds, it would really hurt my chances later since I am bothering them

now, and/or 3) they are so busy with their Christmas rush season, they do not have time to talk with job hunters.

By the way, there are other bad assumptions by job hunters in the areas of time and days year round. These include: 1) Better not call and bother employers for interviews on Monday, they are just catching up their work from the weekend or better not bother them on Friday, they are finishing things up for the weekend, 2) Better not bother them before nine or ten o' clock as they are just getting in to the office and haven't had their coffee yet, 3) Better not bother them after three or four o' clock as they are just finishing things up to leave by five, and 4) forget it during lunch hour from twelve to one.

Based on the above schedule alone, one would believe that the only time to job hunt and schedule interviews would be Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 until 3, with an hour off for lunch. This is not alot of productive job seeking time in a given week. I realize these times may be a little exaggerated, but you get the point.

It is dangerous to assume anything. Remember that old joke about what you make out of you and me when you assume something? Here are 10 documented facts and personal opinion based on observations and experience with one thousand job hunters in the past five years.

Fact Number One. **You are going to be a bother to most of the employers that you call no matter what day or time that you call.** Since you know that this is a basic truth, you might as well call them irregardless of the day or time. I say this with caution and compassion for those employers who let it be known

that they are receptive to calls during certain times. If you want to call one of those, I would respect their wishes. But, if you know of no perfect and preferable time to call, now is as good as any.

If you are that paralyzed with calling because of fear of offending someone because you may be calling them at the wrong time, you need to get over that. Again, you probably will. However, you must make the calls anyway.

Now, back to more Merry Christmas and Happy New Year cheer. Ho Ho Ho.

Bad Assumption Number Two. Employers must be laying back, just trying to make it through the holidays, so they probably do not want to be bothered with hiring decisions.

Fact Number Two. **Most employers are not merely laying back and coasting through until the end of the year. Most of us are working hard just to make ends meet to make it to the end of the year. And beyond.** As much as sixty or seventy per cent of some business's incomes occur during the holiday season. Some, even higher, according to a news report on Cable Network News.

Knowing this, Fact Number One holds. Since you are going to be a bother to most no matter what you do, you might as well try anyway. The worst you can be told is "Come back next year."

This is not so bad when you think about it as next year is only a couple of weeks away. It's kind of like that humorous farewell that sounds so distant but is a funny sort of play on words that you give to your co-workers before you clock out on

New Year's eve knowing you'll be back in two days, "See you next year."

Bad Assumption Number Three. Since they have Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years on their minds, it would really hurt my chances later since I am bothering them now.

Fact Number Three. **If they are not interested in you today, it could be any one of probably one hundred other things that might very well have nothing to do with the holiday.** In fact, "All employers divide into two groups 1) those who would be put off by your handicap (such as age, psychiatric history, prison record, or whatever)," according to Richard Bolles, author of what Color Is Your Parachute. In this light, Fact Number One holds up. You might as well try any way, though as Bolles continues, "2) (there are) those who would not be at all put off by your handicap. Your job is to find the second kind of employer and not pay any attention to the first."

Bad Assumption Number Four. They are so busy with their Christmas rush season, they do not have time to talk with job hunters.

Fact Number Four. **That is precisely the reason to try.** It sounds like they could use some more help to service their customers, catch up on the year end orders, get things squared away to start the new year clean, give them time for a bathroom break, etc.

Also, how many employers do you suppose are thinking, "If I could just get someone to replace so and so, I would fire him in a minute." Not what you like to think about during the holiday season, but it happens. Tom Jackson in his book

"Guerrilla Tactics in the Job Market says, " There are an unlimited number of jobs around if you are willing to see them as problem-solving opportunities." Go solve some employer's problem during this Christmas season and see how fast you get a job, time of year or no.

Fact Number Five. **Since everyone else thinks the holidays are a bad time to job hunt, there are less people looking for jobs.** Since there are less people looking for jobs, there is less job hunting competition. You automatically better your chances by going now.

Fact Number Six. **Many companies are doing their new employee selecting now so they can put people on at the first of the year to coincide with their fiscal year and the tax year.** By the same token, many workers will be let go in December so employers will not have to keep them on their records for the next tax year.

Fact Number Seven. **If there are businesses that are coasting through to the end of the year, they probably have extra time on their hands and may welcome your request for a meeting.** Some people get bored on their jobs and welcome distraction. Sometimes.

Fact Number Eight. After all, tis the season to be jolly. **Employers may be just a little extra jolly and full of good will and just a little more likely to make exceptions to see people more now than any other time of year.** This is just human nature.

Fact Number Nine. **Nobody likes the job hunting process and will put it off anyway they can.** Stop the first five

hundred people that you meet and ask them for their top ten favorite things to do. Chances are job hunting will not be one of them. Nor in their top one hundred, for that matter.

According to the Social Readjustment Rating Scale, which is an emotional stress indicator test, out of forty three items, four job loss, job change, and financial stressors appear in the first eighteen items. People always avoid job hunting as if it were the Black Death or the plague.

Fact Number Ten. **Christmas just would not be Christmas without wondrous things happening this time of year.** Maybe there is a Christmas miracle out there with your name on it. Why don't you go out and see if you can find it as opposed to waiting for it to find you. Maybe you can speed things up by meeting it it in the middle somewhere.

Here are ten good reasons to go out and look for work or a new job during this Christmas holiday season rather than just putting it off. Here is one more absolute truth to close on. If you try, you will succeed. If you don't try, you won't and it is simple as that. May God bless you and have a Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years.

(Marshall J. Karp, M.A., N.C.C., L.P.C. is the owner of New Career in Dover, Ohio. The firm specializes in vocational assessment, career counseling, and job search training services.)